



LINCOLN CHAFEE

U.S. SENATOR

RHODE ISLAND

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, September 26, 2005

CONTACT: Stephen Hourahan
202-224-6167

CHAFEE ANNOUNCES \$9 MILLION FOR RHODE ISLAND DCYF

***Funds Will Benefit Approximately 700 Children
with Mental Health Problems***

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Today, **U.S. Senator Lincoln Chafee** joined **Governor Donald Carcieri** at the John Hope Settlement House in Providence to announce a \$9 million grant award for the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). The award will be distributed over six years and used to further improve the Positive Educational Partnerships (PEP) program, a sophisticated system of care for children and young adults with serious emotional disturbances (SED). From early in the program's history, Senator Chafee has been a steadfast advocate, writing letters of support for it and its predecessor, the Project Hope grant.

"I am happy to announce this award, which will allow DCYF to implement a community-based approach to caring for children who have mental health needs," Senator Chafee said. "Partnering with local schools is the most effective way to streamline healthcare services available to children and to expose families to the services available within the community."

With this funding, DCYF will facilitate a collaboration between the Rhode Island Child Adolescent Service System Program (RICASSP) and existing educational resources to support children with SED and their families. While the PEP program is new to this grant, it is building on the nationally recognized RICASSP community-based mental health system, which has long been supported by Senator Chafee.

In addition, DCYF and the Rhode Island Department of Education have committed to employing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), a national multi-disciplinary approach designed to help schools manage behavior issues, to improve the classroom environment and provide support for all students.

-MORE-

DCYF will improve collaboration between RICASSP and PBIS, increasing access to RICASSP and all other planning and support services, as well as improving educational outcomes for all children.

“By bringing together programs in our community and in our schools, this \$9 million federal grant will enable us to partner more fully with school departments, identify youth with behavioral and mental health problems and create a cohesive plan which addresses educational, mental health and social services issues for each child,” Governor Donald L. Carcieri said. “The Positive Educational Partnership is about ensuring that our most vulnerable children have the tools they need to lead productive lives. I want to thank Senator Chafee for helping Rhode Island secure these federal funds, and DCYF Director Patricia Martinez and her staff for their leadership in building this valuable program.”

With school districts across the state implementing PBIS, this grant will allow DCYF to expand and fully integrate the RICASSP and the social service system into this educational reform movement. It is anticipated that an additional 700 children with SED will benefit from these improvements to services and infrastructure.

"I am delighted this grant will support a partnership with local elementary schools that will allow us to reach 700 children with mental health needs and work with them in their community. " said Patricia Martinez, director of RI DCYF. "This grant provides DCYF and our local community partners an opportunity to do more of the prevention work, a direction in which we would like to see the department focusing. We will be able to fully integrate our community based behavioral health services with educational efforts to serve children and their families in the most natural settings: their homes, schools and communities."

###